



20. UNRESOLVED ISSUES

Some issues involving Fort Wainwright are not easily resolved. This section deals with these issues. The first steps to tough issue resolution are admission that answers are not readily available and a willingness to continue working toward resolution.

20-1 Alpha Impact Area Trespass

Alpha Impact Area on TFTA, is a desirable hunting area, especially for moose. Only the outer buffer zone of Alpha Impact Area is open to hunter access. Trespass is fairly common.

ADF&G enforces the closure of the impact area but believes that USARAK should further evaluate

opening more of the impact area to hunting. USARAK believes that public safety (unexploded ordnance) and liability risks are such that additional openings are not in the Army's best interests. Recent changes to Army Regulation 200-3 support total closure of all impact areas containing unexploded ordnance.

This issue is a matter of risk assessment and risk-taking judgements. It will not be resolved easily since there is little to gain and considerable perceived risk by USARAK if access restrictions are reduced. On the other hand, hunters expect ADF&G to work with USARAK to obtain increased access into Alpha Impact Area.

20-2 Use of Airboats

Section 17-2b(2) describes airboat use on TFTA. There is public support for allowing access of TFTA to airboats for hunting and other recreational purposes. There is also a growing body of evidence that indicates airboats may be damaging ecosystem functionality in wetlands. If so, allowing continued airboat use would be contrary to Army policy.

The Army will continue to collect information regarding effects of airboats on wetlands on Fort Wainwright. If significant damage occurs, there will likely be efforts by USARAK to restrict airboats. It is unknown if restrictions will be required or the nature of restrictions (place, time of year, etc.). Until USARAK completes its information-gathering process and announces results, tensions will likely continue. However, it seems likely that some decision will be made during the next five years.

20-3 Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Permit Fees

The Sikes Act has authorized the sale of military installation hunting, fishing, and trapping permits since 1960. Almost all military installations with such programs take advantage of this law to obtain funds that contain desirable features: they do not expire, exclusive use for installation fish and wildlife management, and exemption from limitations on amounts that can be spent on equipment.

At least \$20,000-\$40,000 (\$10-\$20 per permit) could be generated to support installation fish and wildlife management programs if an efficient permit sales system is implemented at Fort Wainwright. The largest obstacle to selling hunting, fishing, and trapping permits is the establishment of a sales system. There is little incentive for departments other than the Natural Resources Branch to sell permits since at least 90% of the fees collected goes toward supporting natural resources management. Regulations allow only 10% of permit sales income be used to offset sales cost. Thus, using an existing sales sys-

tem is the only feasible way to cover the cost of selling permits.

Another problem associated with implementing a permit system is the adverse reactions by users. This has been resolved elsewhere with little impact after the first year or so. It is certainly in the best interest of USARAK to resolve this issue, especially as Army environmental funds decline and fewer means are available to pay for hunting, fishing, and trapping-oriented management.

20-4 Bear Baiting

Bear baiting is an issue at Fort Wainwright, and this issue mirrors concerns throughout Alaska and elsewhere. Bear baiting is, however, more acceptable to the general public in interior Alaska than many other places. There are two controversial aspects of bear baiting; fair chase and protection of bears from overharvest. The first issue is emotional and unlikely to be resolved with data. The other is a matter of biology. USARAK is planning to gather additional data on effects of bear baiting on the bear population. USARAK will use these data to formulate a plan of action. At the same time, the density of bear bait stations will be evaluated. There are at least three possible outcomes: no change in the current system, eliminate bear baiting, or restrictions on bear baiting stations and techniques. Unless ADF&G changes its regulations regarding bear baiting, bear baiting will likely remain a USARAK issue.

20-5 Trespass Structures

Section 16-2c describes the history and ongoing processes regarding trespass structures on Fort Wainwright. This issue is very difficult to resolve despite solid legal positions of the Army and BLM. Efforts to protect the Army use of the land without the safety and trespass issues continue. However, this issue may be drawing to a close. USARAK's plan to remove trespass structures within two years is a major step toward resolution.